

## SECTION 4

# RA RESPONSIBILITY

RAs who have a contract with DFC/HCSS vary in size and scope of operation, but they are all required to meet certain obligations. Those obligations can include:

### SELECTION OF OUTLETS

RAs must develop a system for not-for-profit organizations to apply for participation as an outlet. RAs must consider the following criteria (not limited to) for an outlet to receive USDA food products:

- ◆ the outlet has been established for a minimum of two years
- ◆ RA is required to physically inspect and visit potential outlet
- ◆ have 501(C)(3) status
- ◆ the physical site meets ADA requirements or can be adapted for the handicapped (ground level is always preferred)
- ◆ Rural Initiative can be implemented when applicable
- ◆ the need in the area to be established where potential site will be located (not in the proximity of other outlets operating in the same area)
- ◆ willingness to serve all eligible persons in need of food assistance that reside in their established area
- ◆ ability to properly store and distribute donated food
- ◆ ability to store food in a locked area when outlet is closed
- ◆ have both refrigeration and freezer capacities
- ◆ ability to maintain the required records and submit records to the RA on a timely basis
- ◆ take temperature reading of dry, refrigerated and frozen areas a minimum of once per week and maintain a temperature log of readings
- ◆ USDA food products must be integrated with like items, **not kept separate**
- ◆ uses current Eligibility Certificate that clients sign on each visit with a poverty guideline of 165%
- ◆ ability to maintain 50% of items in outlet be non-USDA items
- ◆ must be a client choice pantry
- ◆ ability to serve clients at a **minimum** of every thirty days (some outlets serve clients weekly)
- ◆ there is no limit on how often recipients can receive USDA food products
- ◆ agree to post on the outside of building day and hours that outlet is open

- ◆ have an established minimum of two established operational hours per month based on number of households served
- ◆ evening hours and/or Saturday hours are strongly encouraged for working recipients
- ◆ RAs must conduct training for outlets, a minimum of every two years
- ◆ cannot be located in a private dwelling, must be a public facility
- ◆ under no circumstances conduct any type of mass distribution, **NO pre-packing of food items**
- ◆ agrees not to repackage USDA/NON-USDA food products
- ◆ never turning away a client on first visit to outlet regardless of where the client might reside
- ◆ willingness to serve client in need of food or in an emergency situation (can be as often as necessary)
- ◆ no money can be exchanged for the receipt of USDA and/or non-USDA food products or other non-food items
- ◆ each food outlet must have a current Memorandum of Agreement signed by both the RA and the food outlet
- ◆ food outlet must have a copy of the Memorandum of Agreement in their files
- ◆ outlets can never refuse to serve recipients
- ◆ cannot question recipients eligibility when willing to sign Eligibility Certificate
- ◆ the RA ultimately makes the decision to make an outlet a TEFAP site.

## **AGREEMENT WITH OUTLETS**

HCSS will issue the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) that is to be used between the RA and the food outlet. The RA may add verbosity to the MOA; however, HCSS must give approval for the additional requirements. The Agreement must be signed before any food outlet can receive and distribute USDA food products. Homeless shelters and Kids Café's and other qualifying children's feeding programs are considered soup kitchens for identification purposes for this program. Other 501(C)(3) children feeding programs that meet guidelines that are established in areas of low income may be eligible for this program. These sites are basically set up around the school calendar such as offering after school evening meal; lunches and/or evening meals can also be offered when school is not in session. These programs must meet all the health and safety inspections, set nutritionally balanced meals, not receive other funding or per diem per child and any other appropriate guidelines. The sponsor must sign the same MOA and are considered soup kitchens for agreement and program purposes. MOA must be renewed a minimum of every two years. By signing this agreement the outlets are agreeing to meet the criteria of The Emergency Food Assistance Program or will surrender any and all USDA food products. All parties (including HCSS) may terminate upon a **ten-day written notice for any other reason but will again surrender any and all USDA food products.**

Several food outlets under one MOA are not allowable. USDA food products can never be given to an entity that does not have a current signed MOA between the RA and the entity.

Each individual outlet must have a copy of the MOA signed by both parties.

## **METHOD OF DISTRIBUTION**

It is at the discretion of the RA to determine how the distribution will take place within its service area. A RA may maintain a warehouse where the food products are held until the outlets can pickup their allocated product. RAs may also choose to deliver the food products from their warehouse to individual outlets, to a central location in each county in their service area, or a combination of methods. A RA must provide transportation to outlets in requested counties for USDA food products that are outside the RA's physical location. One drop is all that is required in a county. The RA must keep in mind that a decrease in delivery service may be detrimental to some outlets.

RAs that receive direct shipments may distribute product on an ongoing basis. Indiana's central storage can ship product several times each year. However, all shipments will depend on the availability of product. The RA must accept all products being shipped for distribution by central storage no later than the last day of the designated shipping period. However if distributing products prior to the allocation worksheet being released, the RA must keep track of disbursement and then enter this in the inventory workbook. RA's must accept receipt of USDA products within the shipping period. If receipt is not taken during this period of time, the RA will be charged all storage costs including handling charges as set by the storage facility that has possession of such product.

## **ELECTRONIC EMAILING**

Each RA will receive via email a Distribution Workbook prior to receiving a shipment of product. These items must be received from the state storage facility within two weeks of receiving the Workbook. The RA is required to complete the allocation by county and each outlet and return this Distribution Workbook via email within **two weeks** of receipt. Upon HCSS' receipt of the Distribution Workbook the software will create an Inventory Workbook that will again be returned to the RA. You must return the Inventory Workbook each month until all products have been distributed to the food outlets and you have zero products in your storage facility.

New outlet summary information **must be submitted via email prior** to the receipt of the Distribution Workbook in order to be included in the distribution. Changes will not be included after the Distribution Workbook is emailed to the RA. It would be best to submit the information for a new outlet as soon as both the food outlet and the RA have signed the Memorandum of Agreement.

Each RA will be able to update households and meals served on the Inventory Workbook. Other information must be emailed on the Outlet Summary form. **The agency identification number and the outlet identification number must always be used for completion of updates.** The system imports this information based on the information that you submit.

Food is allocated to each of the counties based on the 60/40 split. This allocation must remain in the county. Permission to reduce this allocation must be put in writing via email with a response from the TEFAP Staff.

Soup Kitchens including Shelters do not normally use all the products that are allocated to them based on numbers. You can reduce this allocation and redistribute the food products to other pantries within the county. Remember that all USDA food products should be distributed within three months.

## **CONDUCT PUBLIC OUTREACH**

It is the responsibility of the RA to conduct appropriate outreach activities within its service area. Publication of each outlet's name, address, and days and hours of operation should be made available to the local newspapers, free papers, Help Lines, county DFC offices, and any social service agency in the service areas. Examples of those include: posters, pamphlets, newsletters, placing notices in local papers (including the free publications and neighborhood papers) each county DFC Office, laundromats, churches, grocery stores, local Community Action Agencies and Senior Centers. Public Service Announcements can be provided to local radio and television stations. Activities by the local distribution sites do not relieve the RA of responsibility for conducting public outreach activities. RAs should notify county Offices of the Division of Family and Children and other social service agencies of the outlet's information who assist low income citizens. **Word of mouth may not be used as the sole or primary method of conducting public outreach.** HCSS intends to make monitoring on public outreach a top priority beginning with the Program Year 2003.

## **SCHEDULE OF OPERATING HOURS FOR OUTLETS**

RA must maintain a current list of number of meals or households served days and hours of operation for each Outlet. RA must keep these criteria current for allocation purposes.

## **ACCOUNTABILITY OF USDA FOOD PRODUCTS**

Complete all the records for the USDA food products in the inventory report and then email the report to HCSS. Counting and inspecting all food products upon receipt is basic to inventory control. Every delivery must be checked for possible shortages, overages and/or damage before the product is accepted. RAs may not accept damaged product or sign the Bill of Lading until the RA count agrees with the number stated on the Bill of Lading. Once the Bill of Lading is signed, title is transferred to the RA. By signing, the RA assumes liability and will be held financially responsible for the amount of product shown on the Bill of Lading. Truck driver and RA must sign, date and note any differences or concerns about the product on the Bill of Lading. All shipment trucks must have a form of a Bill of Lading.

## **PROVIDE ACCESS TO HCSS AND AUTHORIZED AGENTS**

USDA requires monitoring of the RAs and Outlets receiving USDA food products. Any RA or Outlet participating in TEFAP must allow access to program records, operations, and storage facility by HCSS staff or designee, USDA staff or designee, or any other authorized governmental agents. They will provide identification if needed or asked.

## **MONITORING OUTLETS**

RAs must monitor outlets that have signed agreements once every two years. A minimum of 50% of the outlets must be monitored the first year. The remaining balance of the outlets is required to be monitored during the next fiscal year for a 100% review. This will be repeated every two years. If RA has thirty (30) outlets or less, 100% of outlets must be monitored each year. RA monitoring must include, but is not limited to the determination of the following:

- ◆ client choice pantry – refer to Section 10
- ◆ outlets maintain 50% non-USDA products
- ◆ current Eligibility Certificate
- ◆ Social Security numbers, income verification, and referrals are not required
- ◆ USDA donated food stored properly and in a locked area
- ◆ issue rates followed
- ◆ food items and non-food items not pre-packed
- ◆ food not repackaged prior to distributing
- ◆ an adequate inventory maintained
- ◆ Eligibility Certificates signed by clients (food pantry only)
- ◆ required informational posters in plain view of clients

- ◆ health, safety, and sanitary conditions maintained
- ◆ sites have scheduled open hours that must be a minimum of 2 hours per month
- ◆ days and hours (kept current) posted on the outside of the building
- ◆ household sizes posted for clients and volunteers
- ◆ product on a first in/first out basis
- ◆ thermometers must be in all storage areas (dry, refrigerated, and frozen)
- ◆ a log maintained of all temperature readings
- ◆ check log readings
- ◆ clients able to receive food a minimum of every thirty days
- ◆ outlet is in a public facility

## **TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE**

RAs must provide training and technical assistance to outlet staff, at least once every two years. Yearly training would be ideal. Each food outlet must have a representative attend training. This training must include, but is not limited to, the following areas:

- ◆ display of required posters in gathering areas
- ◆ specific requirements of the Memorandum of Agreement and its provisions
- ◆ procedure for receiving USDA food products
- ◆ why issuance rates are posted
- ◆ correct storage procedures
- ◆ procedures for handling donated food
- ◆ procedures for maintaining sanitary conditions
- ◆ reports and record keeping
- ◆ non-discrimination and political activity prohibited
- ◆ current eligibility guidelines being used
- ◆ understanding self-declaration of income
- ◆ client choice of product
- ◆ the importance of refrigerators and freezers and the temperature log readings
- ◆ public outreach for the days and hours for dispensing food or meals
- ◆ dispensing of food a minimum of every thirty days
- ◆ treating clients with respect, so their dignity remains intact

The RA may contact the TEFAP Specialist for assistance with training and technical assistance.

## **MAINTAIN AND SUBMIT RECORDS TO HCSS**

All records are to be maintained for a period of three (3) years plus the current year. This includes client signature sheets (Exhibit C). All records are subject to be reviewed and audited by the HCSS and USDA during normal business hours

or, upon request, be sent to HCSS and/or USDA.

The following documents and information should be submitted:

- ◆ Inventory Workbook must be submitted by email **each month until all product is dispensed**;
- ◆ Signed Notice of Delivery from state warehouse by outlet and trucking firm noting any differences which might include short, over, or damaged plus date;
- ◆ Bill of Lading requires two signatures: (1) the person responsible for product and (2) the truck driver. All differences (short, over, damaged) and the date must be written on the Bill of Lading (copies should be made of Bill of Lading prior to faxing for clarity purposes;
- ◆ For direct shipments the **BILL OF LADING AND FORWARDING NOTICE MUST BE SUBMITTED TO HCSS WITHIN THREE (3) DAYS OF RECEIPT OF PRODUCT. DO NOT WAIT FOR ANOTHER DELIVERY.** If paper is thin or colored, please copy before faxing.

Food deliveries and/or grant reimbursement may be withheld if the required reporting is not submitted within the specified time frame.

## **MAINTAIN INSURANCE COVERAGE**

The RA becomes responsible for USDA product when physical delivery is taken. Liability for loss of product for any cause, including fire, theft and damage, will be assigned to the RA that has a contract with DFC/HCSS. The number of cases on hand is usually taken at the end of the month. Product that is not in the RA's storage facility, but at the location of each outlet could be even less due to the average amount of product in the largest outlet. The cost of this required insurance is an allowable expense. If the RA assigns the insurance coverage to the outlets, a current Certificate of Insurance must be on file at the RA for each Outlet. This must be stated in the Memorandum of Agreement (Exhibit A) which is signed by both the RA and the Outlet Representative. The RA must stay current with insurance, as it is ultimately the responsibility of the RA. It is the decision of the RA who (Outlet or RA) will carry the insurance.

## **DOMESTIC DISASTER RELIEF**

RA may distribute donated product in disaster situations where meeting the emergency needs of the community may result in some of those products being consumed by volunteer workers, etc. who may not otherwise be ill, needy or an infant.